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Christmas



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132 Pages of Dreamy Holiday Delights

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Cover Photo by www.timeincukcontent.com

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Bring on the Holidays

The holiday season is fun, wild and exhausting but never dull.

We plan for it with the same mental focus we employ for a wedding. There is the corralling of family members, deciding on centrally located homes for festive gatherings, baking and decorating. There is overt consumption: buying presents, special wrapping and new decorations, all of which stems from the

generous spirit of the season. It's about celebrating with friends and family to end the year memorably, intertwining

our lives with important events. Hermits need to wait until Jan. 1 to go into seclusion because Christmas will find you and prod you into the "fa la la." Shall I remind you of the tales of the Grinch and Ebenezer Scrooge? "Bah humbug" does not fly, even for the staunchest naysayer.

At *Romantic Homes* we have spent months putting together what has become an annual holiday design magazine. This issue, created as we welcomed new editor Staci Dumoski, will take the guesswork out of creating a festive, joyful home for the season, and all who rejoice in the gratuitous display of sparkle will be inspired.

XO

Jacqueline L. deMontravel
Jacqueline deMontravel
Content Director



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Yours Truly

ARTISTIC SIGNATURE

THE WASTEBASKET shown on p. 53 ("Freshened Up," August/September 2015) is from a watercolor painting *Dolly's House* by Judy Buswell, an Oregon watercolor artist. Her watercolors were widely licensed in the 1990s and 2000s. Her designs make a lovely statement in any romantic home.

GAYLE STARKER
Via EMAIL

COLOR'S BACK

AFTER YEARS OF GRAY, BEIGE AND "GREIGE" IN HOME DÉCOR, it was so much fun to see Kristin Nicholas' beautiful use of color in every room ("Brightly Beautiful," August/September 2015). This is why I subscribe to *Romantic Homes*. I especially loved her workspace photo.

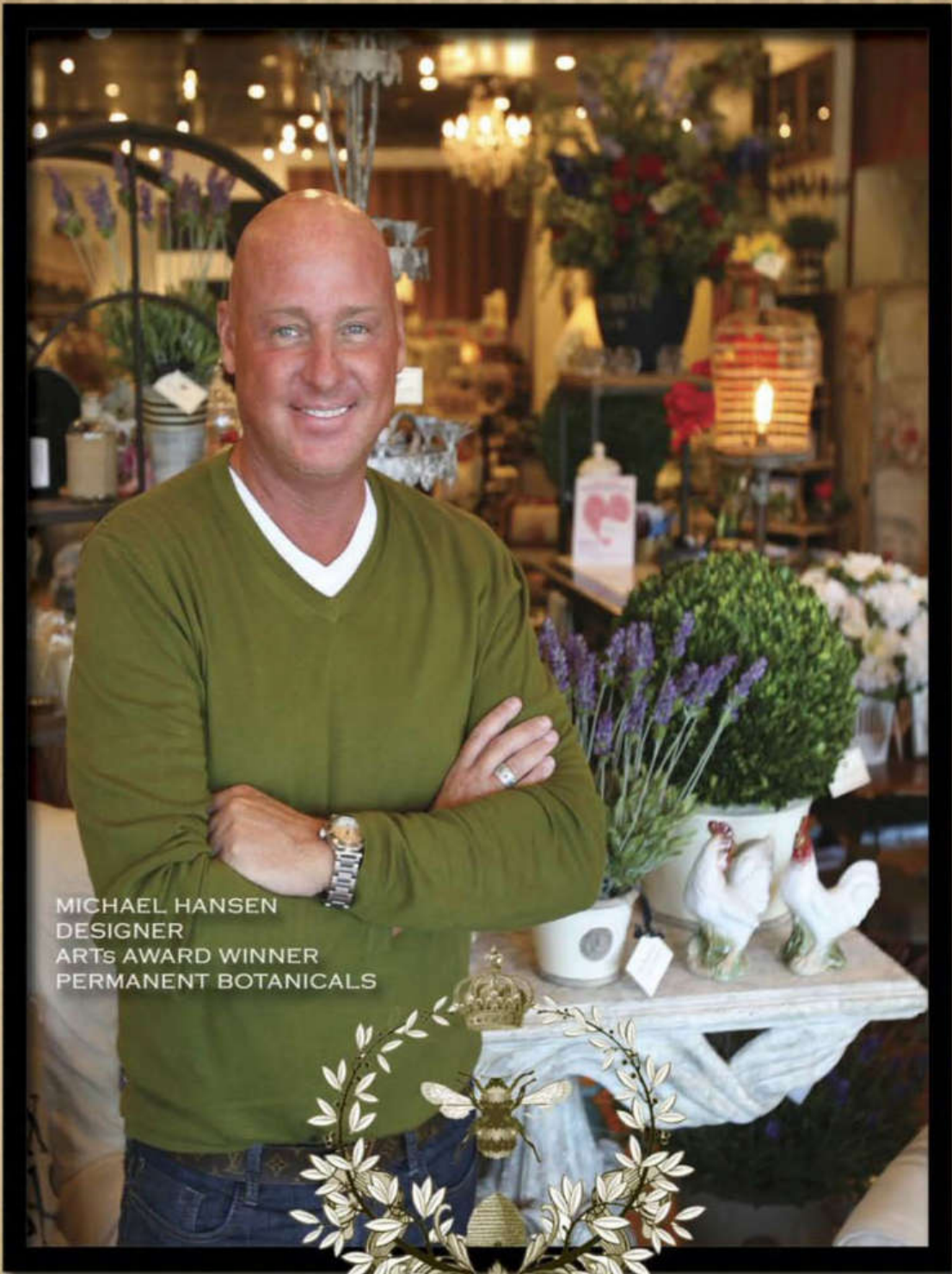
Thanks for this beautiful magazine. It always inspires me.

LAURANN WAKEFIELD
Via EMAIL

PHOTO BY RIKKI SNYDER, COURTESY OF ROOST BOOKS



Romantic Homes loves to hear from you. Please write and tell us how we've inspired you or what you've done to decorate your home using our ideas. We are also happy to answer any questions you may have. *Romantic Homes* reserves the right to edit all letters. Send letters or queries to *Romantic Homes*, Engaged Media Inc., 22840 Savi Ranch Pkwy., Suite 200, Yorba Linda, CA 92887; devlinsmith@engagedmediainc.com or romantichomes.com.



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Gingerbread

This holiday season, surround yourself with a delicious treat for all the senses.

By Staci Dumoski



1

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Holiday Glitz & Glamour

Our home was selected for the Kiwanis Holiday Home Tour

in Lincoln, California. It was a charity event attended by over 500 people. Ours was chosen for "Whimsical Glitz and Glamour."

We had 18 fully decorated trees with mostly vintage ornaments, and my personal favorite was decorated with a collection of vintage Christmas corsages from the 1940s.

Over the years, my husband, Michael, and I have owned furniture stores in Tarzana and Lake Tahoe, California, and Mystic, Connecticut. We have always had an affection for vintage items and incorporated them into our retail stores. We have followed that style in our home as well. I have a wonderful vintage wedding topper

collection started with ours, of course. To me, the toppers represent one of the happiest days of someone's life.

The collection we love the most is our 16 vintage framed costume jewelry trees. Most of them were handmade in the '40s and '50s and are truly works of art. They adorn the walls in our bedroom all year—they are too special not to be displayed.

We love to search out and find these treasures from the past and give them a new loving home.

LAUREEN TOBIAS
VIA EMAIL



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WARMLY WELCOMING

With just a few accessories, your front door and walkway can set the tone for your home's holiday décor.

By Devlin Smith • Photography by Mark Tanner

The moment you see this home, you get a jolt of holiday spirit.

By accenting their front door and walkway with a wreath, a garland, wrapped gifts and a festively filled basket, these homeowners are letting their guests, and anyone who walks by their home, know that Christmas is here and it's time to celebrate.

We dedicate weeks of planning, shopping, assembling, cleaning, hanging, polishing and arranging to get the inside of our homes ready for the holidays. Are you giving that same attention to the outside?

You don't need to fill your lawn with light-up reindeer, inflatable snowmen or animatronic Santas (though these can be fun, especially if you're decorating with little ones in mind). Instead, consider the following tips for creating an entry that is uniquely you this holiday season.

TAKE CUES FROM INSIDE YOUR HOME. Use your entry to give visitors a preview of the holiday home you've spent so much time creating by using the same colors and materials outside as in.

KEEP IT SIMPLE. The entry is giving your guests just a taste of what you have created for the holidays. Don't go overboard. This walkway works because the homeowners used just a few accessories that won't overwhelm guests as they stop to take it all in.

GO NATURAL. Source fresh wreaths and garlands. Add small potted firs and multicolored poinsettias. The bright colors and soft fragrance are sure to charm your guests.

WATCH THE WEATHER. Is there rain or wind in the forecast? Is snow on the way? Will this Christmas be unseasonably warm? Tailor your décor to be able to withstand whatever the weather has to offer.

MAKE IT EASY. If you set out wrapped packages, fabric ribbons and other delicate accessories that you have to pull in at night, be sure you can easily accomplish that. Don't fill your entry with cumbersome pieces that you can't set up and take down yourself.

BE SAFE. Whatever décor you choose, make sure it doesn't block your walkway. You want your guests, and all those Christmas parcels, to be able to make it to your front door.

HAVE FUN. By dressing your door and walkway for the holidays, you're getting an even larger canvas to express yourself. Just like you do inside your home, take the time to create a display that makes you smile.



EMBRACING Tradition

Pulling cherished collectibles out of their boxes and decorating the tree are both important parts of the holiday celebration.

By Diane Sedo
Photography by Jackie Torres

Trimming the Christmas tree with my children

evokes fond childhood memories of celebrating the holiday with my family. We had a decorating ritual: The first items on the list were finding the perfect tree, bringing it home tied on top of the car and placing it in a stand in the living room. Mom made popcorn in a Space Age-design electric popper and melted butter in a tiny Revere Ware pan. My sister and I had bottled Coke served in tall pastel Tupperware tumblers with lids. To keep us entertained, we watched *Rawhide* or *Bonanza* on a black-and-white television while Dad placed the lights on the tree.

My family decorated the tree with the same Shiny-Brite and “Made in Japan” ornaments every year. There were no collector series ornaments then. I placed my favorites on the lower branches of the tree because I wasn’t tall enough to reach the upper ones. I think my mom rearranged the ornaments after we went to bed, then carefully placed the metallic tinsel on each branch.

Contributing editor Diane Sedo is co-author of *Taking Tea with Alice* (1997 Warner Books, 2007 Benjamin Press) and is a certified instructor of Dorothea Johnson’s Tea & Etiquette program (Elmwood Inn Fine Teas). Follow her two Facebook pages: Sentimental Celebrations, and Tea Cups and Cupcakes.



PHOTO BY JAIMEE ITAGAKI



"Fluttering Faith"

From artist Lena Liu

Lena Liu



A vision of hope and encouragement, a portion of the proceeds is donated to Alzheimer's awareness and research programs.

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TIPS:

- Store ornaments in their original boxes if possible.
- To prevent scratches, always remove the metal hooks from ornaments and store them in a resealable storage bag.
- Dust your ornaments with a feather duster or soft artist's brush.
- I store components of vignettes together so I don't have to search through boxes to put them together again.

DISPLAYING ORNAMENTS

Today my Christmas displays are quite simple. A jingle bell wreath decorates my front door each year, and I set out a few vignettes on the piano, breakfast nook table and white kitchen hutch. The pinecone elves, honeycomb Santa, Shiny-Brites, glittery pink snowman and dime-store candy jars that accent my home are my childhood favorites.

When my children were young, I created displays away from curious hands, inside of glass bowls or in my Westmoreland milk-glass sleigh. When my children were old enough to not tip the tree over, we combined their favorites, like action figures and muscle cars, with vintage ornaments from my childhood.

Our pets would also get into the act. One of my favorite things to do at the holidays was visit the local Christmas display with my dog, Midnight.

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Tip

Store like ornaments together. I label the containers to identify the category of items such as glass, fabric or plastic.





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STORING ORNAMENTS

I store my ornaments in sturdy boxes with several layers of divided compartments. Storage and organization stores sell a large variety of storage boxes made specifically for holiday decorations. I individually wrap fragile ornaments in acid-free tissue before packing them away.

Vintage hatboxes are perfect for large or odd-size pieces. When I can, I store each piece in its original box, but that's not

always possible. Egg cartons and plastic containers protect fragile pieces. I store them in a hall or bedroom closet where there is no drastic change in temperature or moisture like in an attic, basement or garage.

Sadly, some fragile glass bauble ornaments did not survive small hands. Each generation breaks a few. I plan to preserve both my cherished childhood heirlooms and my children's favorite keepsakes for their families. Hopefully the vintage ones blend happily with my sons' sharks, cars and Spider-Man.



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Gay Van Beek

MERRY & pink

Have a very vintage Christmas this year with classic ornaments.

Written, photographed and styled by Gay Van Beek

Vintage Christmas ornaments,

whether inherited from grandparents or carefully curated by visiting flea markets, auctions and the like, will bring nostalgia and serenity to the holiday home. Vintage Christmas décor is so popular that a search on eBay for “vintage holiday” will yield over 160,000 items classified by year, make, color and even country. These ornaments of yesteryear bring a softer palette to the season by replacing the harsher traditional bright reds and greens with ethereal hues of aqua, faded silver, and muted green and pink.

Shiny-Brite, one of the most popular brands of vintage ornaments, first came on the scene in the 1950s. These delicate glass ornaments come in all shapes, sizes and colors, with pink the most sought after. The more intricately shaped ornaments command a higher price, and some are even packaged in the original box, which is ideal for purists. Most are marbled and freckled by age and time.

Vintage bottlebrush trees and wreaths are very popular and even harder to find. They come in beautiful shades of aqua, silver, white and pink, and some are adorned with small glass



YOUR VINTAGE CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS will sparkle just as much during the day as they do at night.





[ABOVE] FRESH GREENS are the perfect accompaniment to your vintage ornaments.

[RIGHT] A 1940S WHITE FEATHER TREE SITS ATOP vintage glass cake plates surrounded by silver ornaments.

Tips:

When purchasing ornaments online, ask to have them double-boxed to prevent damage in shipping.

Use ornaments that are missing their metal tops to fill glass bowls and place the bowls around the house.

Store your ornaments from year to year by color, shape and size.



ornaments or flocked with fake snow. A few were made in the style of a music box: The tree sits atop a round pedestal made from tin, which, when wound from the bottom, plays a Christmas song.

Before Shiny-Brites and bottlebrush trees, German glass ornaments were king. They were handblown, made of thick glass and were sometimes intricately painted. Known as kugels (a German word meaning "sphere"), they were originally sold as window decorations, but soon families delighted in using them to decorate the holiday tree. Kugels demand a high price in the marketplace, especially those that still retain most of their original paint.

Glass ornaments went from a cottage industry to an international phenomenon when Frank Woolworth, the founder of F. W. Woolworth and Company (whose stores were often referred to as "five and dimes") opened his first store in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He bought \$25 worth of the ornaments, and they sold out in two days. With over 3,000 Woolworth stores, he went on to make millions from ornament sales alone.

Mix your vintage ornaments with fresh greens from the season. Add pink ribbons, roses and anything that sparkles. Give yourself a few weeks to decorate, taking each ornament out one at a time to capture the specific memory that it brings. And may your days be merry and pink.



For more on Gay, visit
canterburycottagedesigns.blogspot.com.

Say Ahh

A ROMANTIC *Christmas*

Not a fan of red? Opt for iridescent tidings of silver and gold with touches of pink for a dreamy holiday style.

Written, photographed and styled by Jo-Anne Coletti



Festive holiday rooms don't have to be decked out from floor to ceiling in

red and green to feel like Christmas. Thankfully today we have more options. The traditional holiday palette is no longer restricted and has opened up to a softer, paler mood. Since my home is all white with touches of pink, I want my embellishments to unite with the simplicity of my aesthetics without looking heavy or, worse, like they don't belong.

THE MANTLE

Staging a fireplace mantle shouldn't cost you a cent. Most of what you need is right in your own backyard. Here I chose a delicate vine called euonymus winter creeper to create a wispy feel. This woody vine grows wild in my courtyard and is a nice alternative to heavier greenery. I finished the look with mercury-glass bulbs, candles, white lights and a row of pink and white ruffled stockings.

TIP:

A tabletop tree can be just as festive as a big tree and is an ideal solution for a no-fuss Christmas tree for apartments and smaller rooms.



CHRISTMAS STAGING

Your holiday décor will make more of an impact when you consider the colors and style of your home.

The design doctrines of balance, proportion and harmony become stricter for the holidays for the simple reason that you are adding more stuff to your home. Before you begin, edit your space and make some breathing room for your holiday items and your main focal point, the tree. The goal here is unity; your decorations will feel more inviting and orchestrated when they meld with the rest of your home's design to create a harmonious juxtaposition.

SEE SHOPPING GUIDE, PAGE 128



THE TREE: SIMPLE ELEGANCE

For many years my Christmas tree—a grand Victorian-style tree elaborately trimmed in shimmering antiques, ribbons and laces and diamond-dusted paper ornaments—took center stage. It also took up half the room. This year I decided to pare down to a modest tabletop Christmas tree, a Norway spruce. Anchored in a galvanized sap bucket and adorned with a single strand of lights, it's the epitome of Christmas spirit in its simplest form. No need for embellishments; the look here is understated elegance, where simplicity treats the eye to a mood that is angelic and serene.



For more on Jo-Anne Coletti, visit vintagerosecollection.com.



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Many of my curios are vintage in nature, but that's not to say I wouldn't buy a newer piece. *If it speaks to me, and I can afford it, I buy it.*





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QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

Every few years, I like to edit my collection of ornaments and keep only the finest pieces. I purchase one new ornament a year to add to my collection, and I give one away. Many of my curios are vintage in nature, but that's not to say I wouldn't buy a newer piece. If it speaks to me, and I can afford it, I buy it.

MAKING CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

Christmas is all about the memories we create. It is as personal as your family album and tells the story of Christmases past and present, while the beautifully wrapped presents under the tree anticipate the excitement of what Christmas morning holds. It's all about family and friends, where tradition reigns and new holiday memories are born.



HOLIDAY PALETTE

Decorating your tree and home for the holidays should be selective and personal. Just as with the furnishings and colors you've used to style your home, bring the same concept to your holiday décor. Begin by choosing two complementary colors for the theme: one to match the room and one accent color. Any more than that and your eye loses focus. Choosing the same color scheme for gift wrapping will bring it all together.



Your holiday décor will make more of an impact when you consider the colors and style of your home.

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Full of Cheer

An easy mix of family treasures, vintage finds and craft-store staples gives this home unique holiday cheer.

Written, photographed and styled by Kimberly Fenelon

MY HOLIDAY HOME DÉCOR IS A MIX OF DIFFERENT STYLES,

consisting mainly of vintage pieces, family heirlooms and handmade items, with a few new items added in from time to time. I love the warmth and beauty that is created by using vintage pieces with imperfections that add visual interest and a sense of history to the holidays.

Every room in the home gets into the holiday spirit in some form or other. In rooms like my kitchen, where space is at a premium, I find that open shelves, glass cabinets and tabletops make great places to show a little holiday cheer.

I also believe that you can evoke the spirit of the season and make a home feel warm and welcoming without spending a fortune on decorations. In my kitchen, for example, I use candy canes from the grocery store tucked into containers, added to napkin rings and hung on a strand of artificial garland above the windows.





I strung silver jingle bells from a craft store on elastic and use them as napkin rings for napkins I purchased at Pier 1 and Pottery Barn years ago. Extra bells are scattered on the table. I set inexpensive white trees from Michaels on stands made from wood spools covered with red and green ribbon.

A roll of red and white gift wrap serves as an inexpensive table runner. Pitchers filled with evergreen boughs clipped from my yard and sprays of shatterproof ornaments make an inexpensive centerpiece that will last throughout the season.



In the corner cabinet in my kitchen, I display my collection of vintage jadeite dishes that I've collected over the years along with a very special family heirloom: a vintage Santa-face "Tom and Jerry" set that belonged to my grandparents. I added a few candy canes, glittered plastic ball ornaments that I had on hand and a few greens for a simple but cheery holiday display.

I find that using pieces in different rooms from year to year makes them feel new again. For example, the large Santa bowl filled with rolled guest towels could be used in the powder room or filled with greens and used as a centerpiece on a table in the foyer. A single mug holding a tiny tree or floral arrangement is perfect for adding holiday cheer to a bedside table in a guest room without taking up too much space.

For colors, I tend toward the traditional—silver, gold, white, red and green—but every now and then I change things up by adding turquoise or jadeite green. I try to use things that I already have on hand before purchasing new items. Anything in red or green finds its way into the mix, as well as every day items like cookie cutters, children's holiday books, or even well-loved teddy bears and old toys.

Holiday decorating doesn't need to be large or elaborate. It can be as simple as a few evergreen sprigs in a glass or a glittered star hung on a doorknob—both easy, low-cost ideas that can be created with children. Your holiday décor should be an addition to your holiday celebrations without getting in the way and, above all, should be a reflection of you.

SEE SHOPPING GUIDE, PAGE 128



For more on Kimberly, visit
serendipityrefined.com.





No. 4



JANINA TAMMINEN-VIRTALA IS
AN ENTREPRENEUR AND
MOTHER OF FOUR

who creates a fairy-tale Christmas home for her family every year. Flickering candlelight, flowers and small conifers contribute to the Christmas mood throughout the house against a romantic, light-colored backdrop.

"Bringing in some green in the form of small conifers and moss works well in our pale-hued home, she says. "I'm also fond of reds and grays at Christmastime. I have a soft spot for sewn pixies and pigs, wood, natural materials and moss. I avoid plastic ornaments and unnecessary clutter; the right mood comes from fragrances and subtle details. During Christmastime, our home smells of gingerbread, hyacinths, cinnamon and mulled wine."

Christmas CHARMS

In this home, the holiday season begins as soon as autumn arrives.

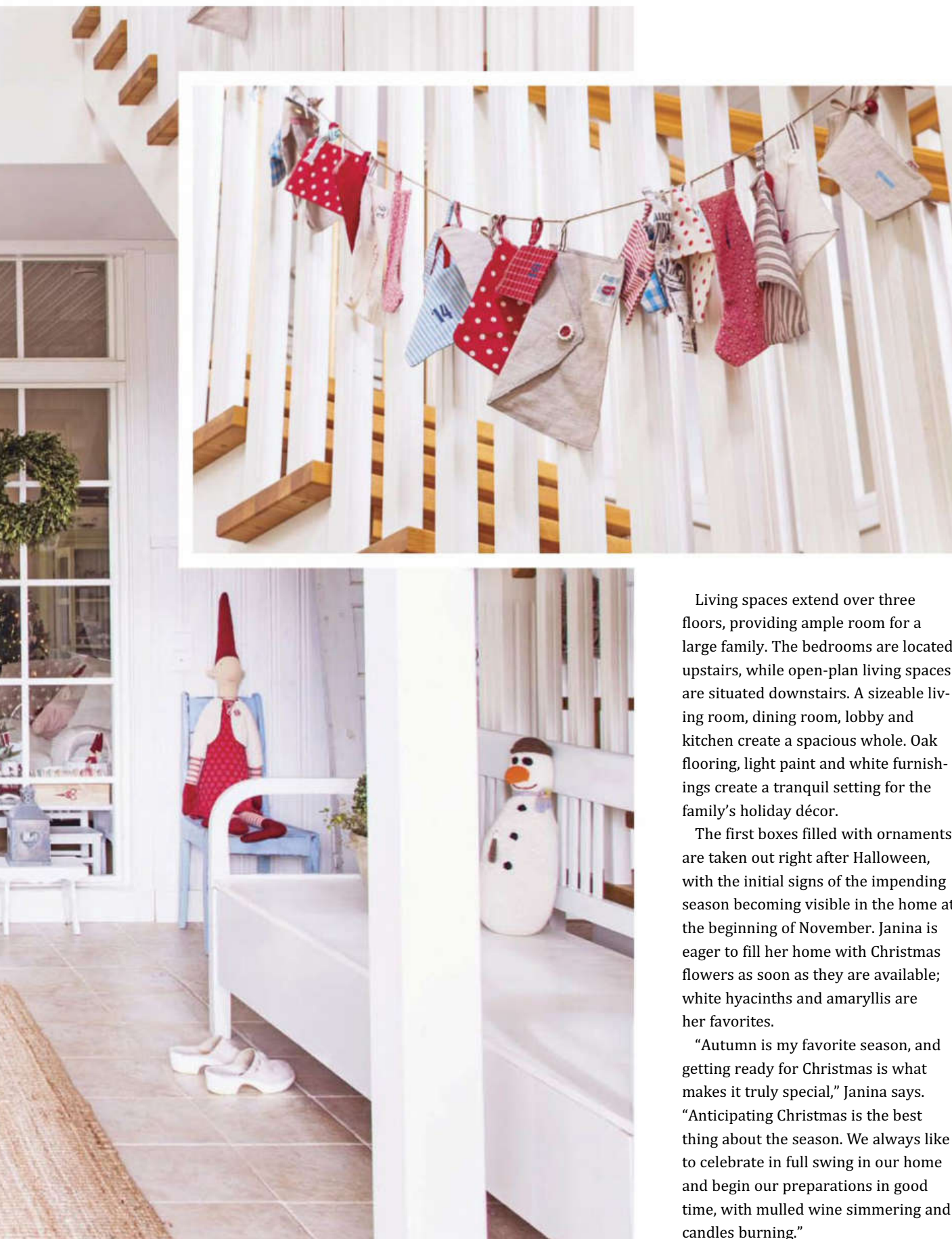
Written by Jonna Kivilahti

Photography by Krista Keltanen

THE FAMILY LIVES IN A THREE-STORY HOME WITH FIVE BEDROOMS, a living room, dining room, TV room, kitchen and sauna. Holiday décor is found throughout the home.



“Anticipating Christmas
IS THE BEST THING
ABOUT THE SEASON.”



Living spaces extend over three floors, providing ample room for a large family. The bedrooms are located upstairs, while open-plan living spaces are situated downstairs. A sizeable living room, dining room, lobby and kitchen create a spacious whole. Oak flooring, light paint and white furnishings create a tranquil setting for the family's holiday décor.

The first boxes filled with ornaments are taken out right after Halloween, with the initial signs of the impending season becoming visible in the home at the beginning of November. Janina is eager to fill her home with Christmas flowers as soon as they are available; white hyacinths and amaryllis are her favorites.

"Autumn is my favorite season, and getting ready for Christmas is what makes it truly special," Janina says. "Anticipating Christmas is the best thing about the season. We always like to celebrate in full swing in our home and begin our preparations in good time, with mulled wine simmering and candles burning."

JANINA ENJOYS DECORATING THE TREE with cherished ornaments. "I like the fact that our ornaments are traditional," she says.





Making gingerbread is an important Christmas tradition for the family. Janina bakes a large, stunning gingerbread house that is placed on the long dining table. She makes a second, smaller one for the children to decorate, usually on the verge of collapsing under the weight of all the sweets they pile on. Janina also makes a gingerbread Christmas tree. Her passion for baking is reflected in the work she does through her company, Bake & Party, which specializes in baking and children's party accessories.

"We invite our children's friends to come and make Christmas confectionary with us using chocolate molds from my shop," Janina says. "We also enjoy making truffles, marmalade and different types of toffee. A hot glass of mulled wine is a Christmas favorite, while our kids go for hot chocolate with a candy cane."

The family decorates the home with traditional, cherished Christmas ornaments. Janina's current favorites include pixies and pigs with a home-made feel, from companies including Maileg.

"We make the gingerbread houses and tree every year, but otherwise I like the fact that our ornaments are traditional," she says. "It feels special to take them out and start decorating the home with the kids. The children also get their own Christmas stockings filled with surprises."

tip

Plan ahead at the holidays. Give yourself time to tackle everything on your to-do list, from decorating your home to wrapping gifts to baking delicious treats.



Another speciality in this household is a cupboard of treats, which the family starts to fill up before Christmas with homemade sweets, truffles, toffee and marmalade. Janina's favorite recipes for Christmastime are from her mother and godmother, but store-bought delicacies are also added to the supply. The doors to the cupboard are left open throughout the Christmas season.

"It's worth getting ready in good time to avoid getting stressed out, doing a little bit here and there, wrapping up parcels every now and then, and enjoying the ambience," Janina says. "And you don't have to make everything yourself; there are plenty of ready-made delicacies available. It's good to think about what feels most important and do that in peace; then perhaps buy the rest."

"WE HAVE A LOT OF PIXIES AND CANDLES STREWN AROUND THE HOUSE," Janina says. "Christmas flowers, like amaryllis and hyacinths, create a Christmas feel. We also like to decorate our home with small conifers, which add a lovely fragrance and mood."

*"Now the best thing
about
Christmas
IS TO SEE
THE
HAPPINESS
SHINING
ON THE
CHILDREN'S
FACES."*



GINGERBREAD PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN THE FAMILY'S HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS. Janina creates a large, ornate house that is prominently displayed on the dining table. The children are given a smaller house to decorate. Janina also makes a gingerbread tree and gingerbread men.



JANINA DECORATES HER
HOME with handmade and
natural pieces.

tips

Give everyone in your family the chance to contribute to your holiday décor by having multiple trees, wreaths or gingerbread houses for all family members to add their personal touches.

Ease into the holiday by incorporating small festive touches into your décor first, like adding wreaths or pine boughs to your home before bringing in the tree, lights, garlands, crèche and the rest.



A TREAT CUPBOARD IS STOCKED throughout the holiday season with goodies like truffles, toffee and marmalade.





THE FAMILY'S ELABORATE, ROMANTIC DÉCOR IS PERFECT FOR CHRISTMAS with plenty of hideaways for Santa's little helpers. Even the old cupboard that serves as home for youngest daughter Melissa's bunny rabbits is spruced up for Christmas.

That attitude is especially helpful when your home is the gathering spot for extended family. "We always spend Christmas at home with grandparents and siblings, a large crowd gathering together and all doing their part in preparing the Christmas dinner," Janina says. "This way there's no unnecessary burden on just one person. We lay the table with silverware and our best crockery for Christmas Eve. My mother always arrives beforehand to prepare the ham and turkey and help out in general. We also always serve different fish dishes and garnishes. My mother-in-law takes care of making traditional Finnish Christmas casseroles and rye bread for the Christmas table."

Christmas Eve is a time for the family to partake in cherished traditions. "Father Christmas arrives every year, which is definitely the highlight of the evening," Janina says. "The atmosphere is rather festive until then, as we sit around the table for a

For more on Janina,
visit bakeandparty.fi.





long time and enjoy all the wonderful Christmas flavors. After Father Christmas has paid his visit, the kids put on their pajamas and are allowed to stay up and play games. Christmas Eve is the one night of the year when the children are allowed to stay up as long as they like."

As her children create new holiday memories, Janina relives her own. "Before having our own kids, my sweetest Christmas memories go back to my own childhood, when relatives would gather in my childhood home to celebrate," she says. "I remember staying up with my cousins. I've tried to recreate all those lovely traditions for my children. Now the best thing about Christmas is to see the happiness shining on the children's faces. You somehow end up reliving your own childhood memories."

SEE SHOPPING GUIDE, PAGE 128.

FESTIVE

Flair



This artist and her family let creativity rule in their home through the holiday and year round.

By Janet McMeekin/GAP Interiors
Photography by Bruce Hemming/GAP Interiors



"THE GIRLS AND I PAINTED ALL THE PINE CHAIRS in pastel shades one Sunday morning while we were still in our pajamas," Jessica says.

WITH EXQUISITE IMPRESSIONISTIC CANVASES ADORNING THE WALLS,

there's no denying that artist Jessica Zoob's home exudes a magical quality all year round, but at Christmas it becomes even more of an enchanting wonderland.

“We love Christmas,” Jessica says. “The girls and I adore decorating the house and tree together. We turn our favorite Christmas songs up loud, open a bottle of champagne and enjoy festive treats while discovering old treasures, including gorgeous little decorations made by [my daughters] Ana, 20, and Kat, 17, when they were younger.”



tip:

“LET YOUR FAVORITE ARTWORK OR CHERISHED PIECES STAND OUT IN A ROOM BY KEEPING THE DÉCOR SIMPLE,” JESSICA RECOMMENDS.





SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Zoobs decorate their home in buntings made from old Christmas cards. Find ways to decorate with those stacks of cards you've stashed in drawers, just waiting for inspiration to strike.

Follow the Zoobs' example and string the cards from garland, twine or yarn you have around your home.

Create a collage of cards to display under a glass tabletop. Frame favorite cards, and make a Christmas-themed art installation in your home.

There are as many possibilities as cards in your collection.

"THE GIRLS AND I ENJOY CREATING VERY PERSONAL BUNTINGS for the festive season from old Christmas cards," Jessica says.



[THIS PAGE] THE BELFAST SINK is the perfect choice for this rustic-feel kitchen.
• [OPPOSITE] THE PINK REFRIGERATOR complements the feminine home beautifully.



The family is unafraid to go big when it comes to holiday decorating. "We really go to town with handmade buntings and fairy lights festooned everywhere," Jessica says. "Beautiful baubles that we've found at vintage fairs and flea markets are hung in practically every room."

A newer piece, though, has become a holiday favorite of Jessica's. "I adore the doll's house that sculptor Karl Smith made for me as a Christmas present," she says. "It's so incredibly detailed with miniatures of my artwork inside and even some Banksy graffiti on an outside wall."

HOMEcoming

Jessica first stumbled on her unique home when she was looking to relocate from London to East Sussex nearly a decade ago. Finding a property that would double as a home and studio was proving rather tricky. However, after months of hunting Jessica uncovered "a little gem" in Lewes. "What sold it to me was the odd little garage on the side of the

house," Jessica says. "I could see it had potential to become a fantastic light-filled studio perfect for painting."

The home did need more than a few updates, some cosmetic and others more drastic. "At the time, the house still had the ubiquitous avocado bathroom suite and was rather drab, but it had pretty bones and a lovely feel," Jessica says.

The family stayed with relatives at the nearby National Trust property Monk's House while the building work progressed. "Buying the house while it was virtually an empty shell was ideal," Jessica says. "Right from the outset I wanted it to be functional and extremely child-friendly, somewhere the kids could rollerblade to their hearts' content."

In fact, Jessica wanted that wear and tear to become an important part of the home's look and charm. "My aim was to create a home where the scratches and scuffs of life would weather down and add character, instead of looking tatty," she says.

A large mirror is mounted on a white wooden wall, reflecting a staircase with a white railing and a wall with a white birdhouse. The mirror is decorated with several silver heart-shaped ornaments hanging from the top. The text is positioned in the upper right area of the mirror's reflection.

A LARGE MIRROR bounces natural light back into the new den area, which features a staircase painted in delicate pastel shades.



"THE MEZZANINE FLOOR WITH ITS GLASS PANELS WORKS SO WELL IN THIS SPACE, which is relaxing [and cozy] by day and then, if required, can become a guest room by night," Jessica says.



[ABOVE] "ANA LOVES BRIGHT JEWEL COLORS and chose these paintings to set the tone for her bedroom," Jessica says. • [RIGHT] ONE OF JESSICA'S STRIKING PAINTINGS takes center stage in this vibrant dining room.





JESSICA PAINTED THE FLOOR-BOARDS OF DAUGHTER Kat's bedroom in a muted palette of pale grays, off-whites and hints of pink to complement the feminine scheme.

With this lived-in vision in mind, Jessica asked the builders to leave the white plaster walls unpainted and lay quirky wooden floorboards of varying thicknesses. "When we moved in we had a big painting party to brighten up the wooden sitting room floor," she says. "The girls and their friends set to, using vivid pinks, reds and yellows and, by the end of the day, it had all the hallmarks of a Damien Hirst work."

Jessica then toned it down, creating a completely unique and durable floor for the home. "After the floor

dried, I painted over it in a slightly less gaudy Farrow & Ball shade before adding a final coat of cream," she says. "Gradually, the base colors have worn through, and I love the textured effect. From children's parties to, now, stiletto heels, it's proven extremely practical."

Incorporating tongue-and-groove paneling in various rooms also added to the house's character.

"In places it's hard to tell whether the paneling is part of the wall or a cupboard," Jessica says. "It's a simple way of creating plenty of disguised storage."



"THE GIRLS' NEW DEN
is a super place to sew,"
Jessica says.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Over the years, the Zoobs' home has evolved as the children have grown older and demand for Jessica's work has increased. In 2009, the artist decided the time was right to find a separate studio on the outskirts of Lewes.

"This had the knock-on effect of freeing up space in the house where, two years ago, I created a teenagers' den plus guest bedroom," Jessica says. "A teeny, weeny 12-inch-wide door now leads from the sitting room through to these rooms. When shut, it just looks like a cupboard door."

With each update and addition, the family is making the home more and more its own. "The house works really well for all of us and is a great place for parties," Jessica says.

SEE SHOPPING GUIDE, PAGE 128.



[BELOW] PAINTING AN OLD PINE
CHAIR IN CHEERY YELLOW adds
impact to the paired-down bath-
room. • [RIGHT] PEBBLE TILES lend
texture and interest to the bathroom.



PRETTY BUTTERFLY CUSHIONS AND AN INTRICATE QUILT made from silk, lace and vintage fabrics by Jessica, a former theater designer, are delightful additions to the tranquil master bedroom.

"I LOVE THE SIMPLICITY OF MY BEDROOM, WHICH IS A REALLY CALM AND PEACEFUL SPACE," JESSICA SAYS.

"WHEN THE GIRLS WERE YOUNGER, I used to be able to glance out the window and spot them playing in the school playground that's just opposite my house."







DAUGHTER KAT'S PREFERENCE FOR PASTEL SHADES inspired the scheme for this pretty bedroom, where Jessica's painting takes pride of place above the cozy cabin bed.



MADE WITH LOVE

Handmade decorations, ranging from children's art projects to heirlooms passed down through generations, are some of our most-cherished holiday décor.

Experiment this season with new ways of giving these priceless pieces the spotlight. Purchase small, tabletop trees to display children's ornaments.

Create displays of framed and matted homemade cards. Paper cabinets with school masterpieces. Whatever method you choose, be sure to show off the decorations and accessories that mean the most.

WITH ITS TWINKLING TEA LIGHTS, butterflies and delightful princess dolls, Kat's bedroom has a festive, fairy-tale feel.





Joy of the *Season*

This Connecticut home is a shining
star of Christmas décor.

Written by Sarah Reidy-Ferguson
Photography by John Gruen
Styling by Jacqueline deMontravel

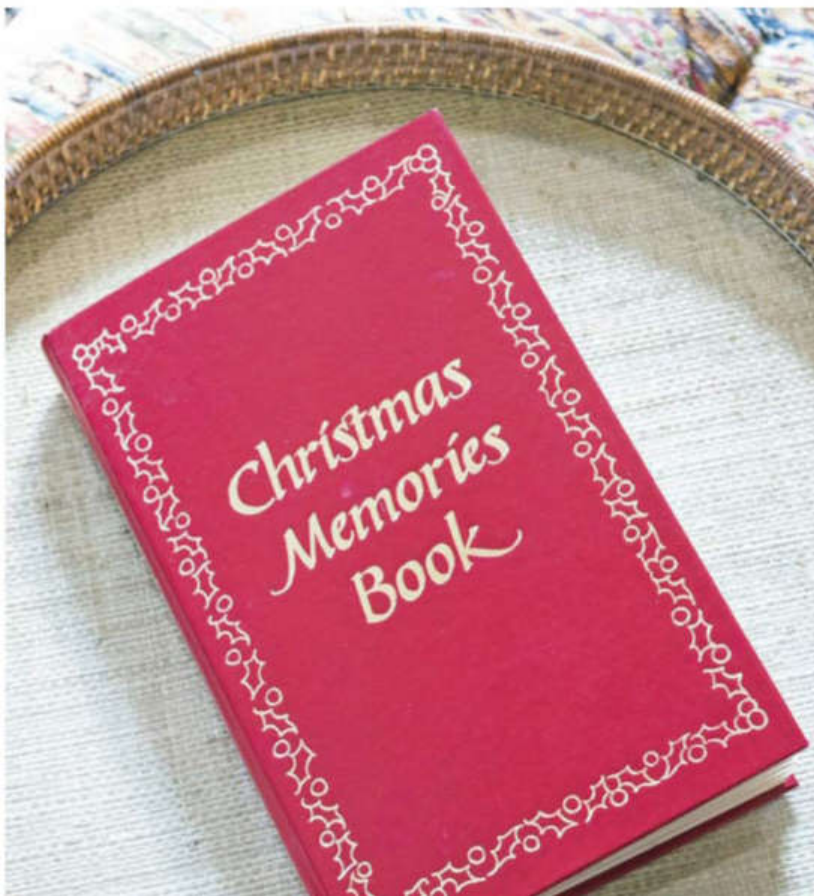


NESTLED IN AN IDYLIC TOWN LOCATED ON THE CONNECTICUT COASTLINE, a brick Georgian-style home

transforms into seasonal splendor during the holidays. Owner Diane Weeks draws on her background in design, fine art and illustration as an influence inspiring her Christmas decorating. A celebration of the love she has for her family and her home is woven throughout her décor and stylistically reflects elements of elegance, whimsy and an acute attention to detail.

Decorating begins the day after Thanksgiving and, as Diane describes it, the preparation process is deliberate and methodical. The carpets are covered with sheets, and labeled boxes are brought down from the attic and placed in their corresponding rooms. Shelves and tables are emptied of year-round collections and safely packed away. Pillows are exchanged, Christmas linens are ironed, holiday throws and dolls are placed on the beds and holiday books are placed in the library. Everything is cleaned, silver is polished, and chandeliers and lighting are shined. Even music is changed to holiday-themed songs and played throughout the house.

Diane prefers to use a mix of fresh and faux trees. She selects a fragrant balsam tree as her main focal point for its sturdy branches that ensure the safe-keeping of our heavier ornaments and recommends having the trunk



[TOP LEFT] THE STAIRWAY IS ACCENTED WITH MR. AND MRS. CLAUS standing alongside treasured holiday accessories. The bannister is draped with faux evergreen decorative roping, tied with ribbon and lights. • [BOTTOM LEFT] THE WEEKS FAMILY'S CHRISTMAS MEMORIES BOOK, which chronicles the favorite details from each Christmas, is placed near the tree.

freshly cut right before stand placement to guarantee longevity. Faux trees in a range of sizes are placed in the living room, dining room and bedrooms. Diane notes that working with faux trees is easier and less time-consuming when decorating with a specific theme.

Through the years, Diane has accumulated an ornament and accessories collection with over 200 treasures that span the decorative spectrum, including dolls, precious handblown ornaments, gilded angels and Victorian Santas. A featured finishing and sentimental touch to her main tree is to place her family's Christmas Memories Book, which chronicles every Christmas, noting favorite gifts, meals, gatherings and photos on a table nearby.

Each room showcases distinctive hand-selected décor to ensure a sense of fluidity. Diane places favorite pieces in the master bedroom: her childhood Christmas music box, our glittering holiday house and doll collection, and a small tree adorned with sentimental gifts from friends is lit with pink lights. In the sitting room, the Victorian dollhouse boasts its holiday trimmings both inside and out. The kitchen is stocked with ingredients for Christmas cookies and treats, with holiday cookie cutters and cookbooks placed within reach to inspire baking.

Diane has her spirited design tailored to her whimsical tastes and recommends that personal style is the best way to approach holiday decorating. If just starting a collection, look to accessorizing the decorative details indicative of the season—greenery, pinecones and berries—and incorporate shades of traditional red and

THE HOME'S MAIN TREE IS A BALSAM, selected not only for its fragrance indicative of the season but also for the strength of the branches to safely hang an assortment of ornaments.



THE DINING ROOM reflects holiday entertaining at its best. The table is dressed with fine Wedgwood Christmas china. Guests are greeted with individually wrapped presents with hand-tied bows at each place setting.



green to reflect a customized décor. She adds that over time, “you will most likely notice your own style evolve” but is quick to point out that it “doesn’t have to be perfect.” Ultimately, Diane believes “creating memories and traditions for your family and loved ones comes from a desire to make everyone feel ... appreciated and cared for. There’s no right or wrong way of celebrating the holiday as long as it’s done with love.”

[ABOVE RIGHT] A SMALLER FAUX TREE IS DECORATED with a collection of vibrant dancing dolls and placed as a focal point in the dining room. • [BELOW RIGHT] VINTAGE DOLLS AND HOLIDAY TAPESTRY PILLOWS are placed on an antique settee. Presents are wrapped in an assortment of bright-colored paper.

TIPS:

“It is critical to clean everything thoroughly before packing it away for the year,” Diane recommends. “Dust can discolor fabrics and dull fine finishes over time.”

Diane suggests stocking a Santa’s workshop with a supply of different kinds of glues, tweezers and pliers on standby to repair and/or avoid damage to decorations.

Take your time; do not rush in dismantling, packing or unpacking decorations and accessories.

Source holiday ornaments for next year at half the price. Visit stores the day after Christmas for great deals on holiday décor.

Add sugar to the water that your fresh tree is standing in to boost longevity.

“Keep a file of photos of your favorite holiday looks,” Diane recommends. “You will most likely notice your own style evolve.”





[CLOCKWISE FROM TOP] A VIBRANT CHRISTMAS SWEATER, in a traditional Nutcracker design, will be worn at the Weeks' annual holiday gathering. • A VINTAGE VANITY is accented with delicate Christmas accessories. • ANTIQUE JEWELRY DISHES and trays are filled with Diane's Christmas pins. • BATHS FEATURE HOLIDAY TOWELS and treasured smaller accessories placed within reach to admire.





Festivity in *Glow*

It's not glitter and glamour that transform this decorator's house into a festive Christmas home. Instead, it's subtle vignettes that catch the eye and warm the heart.

By Monique van der Pauw
Photography by Ton Bouwer/moonshineweb.eu
Styling by Aya Mulder
Produced by Features & More



SOMETIME AT THE BEGINNING OF DECEMBER, AYA MULDER decides that this will be the day to start decorating her home for Christmas. The

owner of a decorating and styling studio and a web shop for French antiques, Aya has reserved one small room in her house for storing treasures and finds from antiques markets. It's here that she stores her Christmas decorations, carefully kept "in their old, original packing and other beautiful boxes like hatboxes." She takes them out, spreads all of them out on her dining table and, little by little, the baubles, angels, candleholders, garlands and many more collected items find a perfect place to shine somewhere in the house.

Each and every room is decorated; even in the bathroom you can spot a candle and a small branch of pine wrapped with a romantic ribbon.

"I hop through the house, never work according to a plan or idea, I just follow my heart and instincts," Aya says. "I also open up my closets in which I keep other accessories, like my decorated crockery, a lot of glass and silverware, special glasses, etc. Everything can come in handy. It's easy to go to a shop and buy decoration materials, but for me that's no fun, no challenge at all. I really like to decorate using the things that are already in the house and things that I've come across throughout the year, especially for Christmas, like a lovely little angel or a small mother Mary statue. But many things will return into their box or closet, because I don't want my house to be overfull, too decorated. I don't like extravagance; it's the little things that make me feel fine. The beauty of simplicity, that's me."

[OPPOSITE] A BEAUTIFUL VIGNETTE IN SPARKLING SILVER. The mercury-glass candleholders are charmingly decorated. The bauble comes from a collection of Christmas décor found in old boxes in Aya's mother's attic. She created the jeweled headband with wire, old lace and foam roses. The garlands were found at a market.

LACE AND TULLE

When Aya bought the house in 2004, it was worn out, dark-colored and dreary. But with the help of her father, a carpenter and the owner of a wallpaper and paint shop, she turned the 1919 corner house into the paradise that it is today. With light colors, a beachy-whitewashed floor and just a small amount of furniture, she created the tranquil atmosphere that makes her feel happy and relaxed.

"I believe that it's in an atmosphere like this that the characteristics of the house itself and the furniture in it come out best," Aya says. "I don't need to add a lot to create a festive feeling."

Rather than an extra-large Christmas tree ("which gets robbed by the cats anyway"), Aya opts for a small Nordmann spruce fir placed on a small table and decorated with a few soft-colored glass baubles, a silver garland and knotted bows of old lace and linen.

Even more refined are the vignettes that can be found throughout the house and catch the eye with their feminine charm. On the chimney, an ornate garden vase is filled with baubles, a pearl necklace and a fine piece of tulle. On the nightstand in Aya's bedroom, there's a wreath of feathers, serving as a bed for an old Christmas tree topper, a broche and an angel. On a Biedermeier couch a lace top and cute cardigan are waiting to be worn at Christmas dinner. Guests will find little candles, pinecones and a present on a table in the guestroom, and a bauble and a beautiful piece of French soap styled on a little towel in the bathroom.

Lots of candles lighten up the wall planks in the kitchen, the steps in the hall-

SMALL BUT FESTIVE, THE LITTLE CHRISTMAS TREE in the living room is decorated with old baubles in a subtle soft color, a silver garland, and knotted bows of old lace and linen. The old leaded glass window stands in the windowsill throughout the year, but has extra charm now. Aya made the lampshade and furnished the couches with fake leather.





“THE BEAUTY OF
SIMPLICITY,
that’s me.”



ATTIC TREASURES

Planning your Christmas décor is a great excuse to clean out closets, attics and basements in search of long-lost treasure, as Aya and her mother recently did.

"In the attic of my mother's house, we found about 10 boxes stuffed with old Christmas decorations, some of it once belonging to my grandparents and even great-grandparents," Aya says.

"[There were] many, many old baubles, made of glass in silver and soft colors, tree toppers, garlands made of glass, beautiful paper. We spent two hours taking everything out, two hours of nostalgia and sweet memories."

You could discover items you didn't know you had or feared were lost forever.



**A BUREAU IS ACCENTED
WITH A MIRROR,** a glass bell
covering old wine glasses and
a garden vase filled with
Christmas decorations. The mir-
ror behind it is well placed for
an extra sparkling effect.





[LEFT] THE LID OF AN OLD TUREEN is decorated with a handmade wreath. • [RIGHT] HERE NAPKINS ARE DECORATED with branches of pine, tillandsia and asparagus.



way and even the inside of a closet. The dining table is covered with linen and tulle; on it is a centerpiece composed of fine glassware, shiny baubles and an old tureen decorated with a tiny wreath—a vignette brought together in an antique frame. More abundant decoration can be found in the hallway: the stairs wrapped with garlands of branches and old Christmas lights, and sparkling candles everywhere.

“The hallway is where you enter the house; it’s a welcoming place,” Aya says. “Entering here, one immediately experiences it’s Christmastime, a wonderful time.”

CHRISTMAS ON THE VERANDA

Decorating her house is as much of a pleasure for Aya as celebrating Christmas itself is (“a feast of creativity”). She never misses the veranda, which gets a fairy-tale look with a large garland of lights that subtly glow in the dark. Aya adds some natural décor with a small Christmas tree, pine branches and a wreath of moss.

“I like to use natural green outside, but in the house itself I think it’s too dominant, so only a few tiny branches are seen there,” she says. “I like to use flowers, though. I always compose a nice bouquet of Talea roses, a specie of the Ecuador rose, with a beautiful, soft-colored big flower.”

Comfortable plaids, furs and a fire pit keep host and guests warm while enjoying their predinner drinks and appetizers. The Dutch celebrate Christmas for two days. The first day

THE DINING TABLE IS COVERED WITH LINEN AND TULLE. On it is a centerpiece composed of glassware, candleholders and a tureen brought together in an old frame. The lid was decorated with a handmade wreath.

"I REALLY LIKE TO DECORATE
USING THE THINGS THAT ARE
ALREADY IN THE HOUSE AND
THINGS THAT I'VE COME ACROSS
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR,

especially for Christmas."



TIME FOR MEMORIES

Christmas is a season for reliving cherished memories and building new ones. As you set out beloved ornaments and décor, take time to reflect on Christmases past and why this is such a special time of year.

"When I was a child, my two brothers and I always helped my mother decorating the Christmas tree and preparing dinner. I remember shrimp cocktails and roulade," Aya says. "We did everything together; it was a feast of love and togetherness."

"We sang Christmas songs with Daddy playing his organ; sometimes I joined in on my clarinet. In our family, my father was the pacesetter, the one who made everyone laugh and feel happy. He died in 2012 and I miss him most dearly at Christmastime."

"ENTERING HERE, ONE IMMEDIATELY EXPERIENCES IT'S CHRISTMASTIME, *a wonderful time.*"

Aya's family gathers at her mother's house; the second day Aya welcomes her mother and some friends at hers. Aya loves to cook for them, serving a changing menu every year, but never without a delicious chocolate cake and a cardamom cake "covered with melted white chocolate and silver sequins."

"To me, a festive Christmas home is more than just decorating the place, it's all about the whole picture," she says. "I also take care of atmospheric music, nicely scented candles, drinks like *glühwein* [warm, sweetened red wine], festive food. When everything's fixed, and when the candles are burning, the table is set and dinner is ready, I feel the job is done. Now it's time to come together and enjoy Christmas."

SEE SHOPPING GUIDE, PAGE 128.





THE GUESTROOM FEATURES WALLPAPER FROM WALLQUEST and an old iron bed found in France that Aya painted. On a small table she put some presents for her guest. The small wall cabinet was made by Aya's father using a wine box and a frame.



[ABOVE] THE VERANDA IS DECORATED WITH A GARLAND OF GREENERY AND LIGHTS, a little Christmas tree, wreaths, branches and lanterns. A heater, plaid throws and fire pits keep guests warm while they enjoy their predinner drinks. • [BELOW RIGHT] THIS GARLAND OF BATTERY-POWERED CHRISTMAS LIGHTS is ideal for use in a spot where there's no electricity. Aya draped it around a birdcage.



For more on Aya, visit
decoraya.nl.



ALL THAT *Glitters*

This designer mixes modernity with comfort in her holiday home to create the ultimate West Coast Christmas.

By Nikki Renshaw

Photography by Janis Nicolay

WHEN VANCOUVER HOME DÉCOR EMPORIUM THE CROSS DÉCOR & DESIGN OPENED A decade ago, Stephanie Vogler and Darci Ilich redefined West Coast design. Up until then, the region's seriously stylish had to travel stateside to find fabulous furnishings. Now, through a 5,000-square-foot retail space and interior design studio, The Cross serves clients from all over the world who flock to the firm for design inspiration. The firm's design ethos casually mixes streamlined modern elements with vintage comfort to create a uniquely West Coast style.

Nowhere showcases this effortless design aesthetic more perfectly than Stephanie's downtown apartment. With a panoramic view of the city and mountains, the home epitomizes The Cross's signature style. A huge antique gilt mirror is casually propped against the living room wall and reflects an Eames-style marble-topped dining table and contemporary dining chairs. Large, slipcovered sofas add comfort, while sleek modern pieces create balance in the room.

"I added a French gilt chair and a

A HUGE ANTIQUE GILT MIRROR is casually propped against a wall to reflect the city's stunning views.



WITH VERY LITTLE SNOW
IN VANCOUVER, Stephanie
was determined to bring a
winter wonderland inside for
her children to enjoy.



gold-toned chandelier to go with the mirror,” Stephanie says. “Any time you have a grouping of three things of a single type, you have a theme.”

But Stephanie is quick to point out that while her home is her “sanctuary in the sky,” it is also completely family friendly. “I love my work and love playing with textures and colors, but I want home to be about spending time with my family,” she says of the home she shares with husband, John, and children Hudson, 6, and Emerson, 4. “Everything at home is casual and spontaneous. I don’t worry about the kids spilling drinks on the sofa or setting a fancy table for friends.”

Stephanie lets simplicity guide her, but it is her innate sense of style that makes her design decisions look so unaffected. “I’m just not a fussy person,” she says. Even her approach to decorating for the Christmas holidays is simple and elegant, with just the right touch of whimsy. With very few decorations adorning her Christmas tree, it’s left to the flocked white branches to create an enchanting winter scene.

“There is so little snow in Vancouver I thought they’d have fun if I brought a little bit of the white stuff inside,” she says. “The tree is my way of letting [my family] enjoy that classic Christmas feeling at home.”

The few Scandinavian-inspired ornaments that have been strategically

[TOP] PLAIN BROWN PAPER serves as gift wrap, and a pretty candy-cane ribbon adds festive flair.

[BOTTOM] STEPHANIE DECORATES HER TREE with an assortment of Scandinavian-inspired ornaments.





*“I wanted friends
to walk in,
PLOP DOWN
AND BE
THEMSELVES.”*



LAYERS OF WHITE AND CREAM
create the perfect winter backdrop.
Cozy textures and fabrics add
warmth and interest.



placed on the boughs are child-friendly and understated. “They’re delightfully simple and gentle,” she says. “They are about imagination and dreaming, not about making a decorating statement.”

Stephanie takes everyday items and uses them in unexpected ways to create magically innovative vignettes. A child’s piano is given a coat of white paint, while a string of sparkling fairy lights casually thrown in a pile on the floor looks carelessly glamorous. “I like to create vignettes with things I already own,” she explains.

Vintage glasses and vases are repurposed to hold Christmas

treats. Off-cuts of wallpaper and fabric are tied up and carelessly thrown into glass bowls to create centerpieces for tables. The simple brown and white paper she uses to wrap gifts is also perfectly understated. “The kids and I often make our own gift wrap, using craft paper and metallic stamps,” she says. “I like the contrast of homemade craft wrap with sparkly ribbon.”

Stephanie is also happy to use the apartment’s predominantly white palette as the perfect backdrop to showcase some seasonal sparkle. “If I want a bit of glamour, which I love, I just drop in touches of silver and gold,” she says.



"Against a neutral background, their shine makes a room feel special."

While her metallic theme is a design staple, Stephanie changes her seasonal accent color every year to keep her Christmas décor fresh and exciting. "One year it may be green, another it might be icy blue," she says. This year she's used coral, which was inspired by a cushion she bought for the shop. "It's a warm red that's bright at the same time. I love it."

However beautiful and effortlessly elegant her home may be, Stephanie says what dictated her design style was creating an environment that friends and family would really be able to enjoy. "I wanted friends to walk in, plop down and be themselves," she says. "I wanted them to feel relaxed enough to open the fridge and help themselves."

And while they're sitting back and enjoying themselves, they can take in their beautiful surroundings and be truly inspired.

SEE SHOPPING GUIDE,
PAGE 128.



HOLIDAY TREATS ARE SHOWCASED ON ELEGANT VINTAGE PLATES, which are placed on occasional tables for hungry guests to sample.

STEPHANIE LOVES TO PLACE PLATES OF COOKIES or glasses full of candy around her home.





A BELGIAN-STYLE CHEST was updated with a coat of white gloss and repurposed as a bar and buffet.



ROSES ARE A CONSTANT INSPIRATION FOR STEPHANIE. "My grandmother was a painter, and most of her art included roses," Stephanie says. "I think I inherited my love of them from her."



tips

By making simple tweaks like adding ribbon, tea lights or tea towels, you can repurpose items from your year-round collection for the holidays.

Spice up your holiday décor by introducing a theme color into your traditional display.

Embrace your personal style for the holidays. Don't feel compelled to stick to the traditional red, green and sparkly if you prefer pastels or muted tones.

A CHILD'S PIANO IS PAINTED WHITE and placed next to a pile of sparkling fairy lights to create a casually elegant vignette.







[THIS PAGE: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT] **tone-on-tone wallpaper** and a snow-white headboard create the perfect backdrop for festive red and white pillows and a comfy sheepskin.

With floor-to-ceiling windows and a peaceful white palette, Stephanie's office is calm and conducive to letting her creative juices flow.

Stephanie's home is about spending time with her family, and her design focuses on keeping everything casual and spontaneous.



CHIC CHRISTMAS *coloring*

Splashes of aqua and pink add a uniquely vintage flair to this holiday home.

Written, photographed and styled by Janet Coon

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INTRIGUED WITH CREATING

pops of serene color in my white updated ranch-style 1960s home. As a child who could entertain herself for hours on end with a pad of paper and a classic box of 64 crayons, I had no idea then that my many creative combinations would lead me to become a designer with a keen eye for color.

For the holiday season the look is soft and serene with hues of blue brightening up the home's neutral sofas and chairs. The living room furnishings are all vintage and antique finds, and the room has a decidedly French flair with a dash of feminine charm. My holiday scheme began with the thought of accents of my favorite shades of aqua and pink, and a pastel patina took the lead.

In the living room I started with a large fresh Frasier fir. I love to create the welcoming and warm aura of a fresh forest as you enter our home by using a natural tree and other scented seasonal greenery. The atmosphere of the holidays must be played up when you live in a tropical climate as we do, by using color and smell.

THE HOME'S HOLIDAY DÉCOR was influenced by Janet's favorite shades of aqua and pink.

JANET OPTED TO DECORATE the large
Frasier fir in the living room only with
strings of lights.





THE LARGE WREATH OVER THE MANTEL was a yard-sale find. It's the only faux greenery in the living room.

The tree was set into a corner and embellished simply with strands of lights. I have free decorating rein when it comes to the living room that also serves as my photography studio. In the family room the decorating centers around our large tree that is festooned as a total family affair.

The nonworking fireplace is a strong focal point in the room, and it's been dressed with more of the fresh greenery that I gathered and

recycled from the local Christmas tree lot. Illuminated with strands of twinkle lights and a few vintage holiday mercury-glass baubles and assorted vintage pieces in my signature shades of aqua, the massive wreath hanging over the mantel, a vintage yard-sale find, is the only faux piece in the room and is finished off with a metallic bow.

A pair of vintage benches acts as a coffee table and a place to display vignettes. Wallpaper from



[ABOVE AND LOWER RIGHT] VINTAGE WALLPAPER is reused as gift wrap.

[UPPER RIGHT] A LIGHT FIXTURE is used to display vintage ornaments.

tip:

THINK OF REPURPOSING VINTAGE ITEMS SUCH AS FLUSH-MOUNT CEILING FIXTURES FOR DISPLAY.



the 1940s in shabby vintage tones has been used to wrap gifts that spill around the room and serve as décor elements with romantic vintage charm. More of my glass ornaments and strands are added to a glitzy beaded ceiling fixture that has been repurposed into a bowl.

A piece of reclaimed wood with the original chipped aqua peeling paint had hooks added for hanging vintage tulle wreaths and white velvet stockings. Sometimes all it takes are fresh flowers arranged in vintage Mason jars for a very low-cost setting of the stage of décor.

NATURAL AND FAUX GREENERY are major themes throughout the home.

Shelf displays and table settings are accented with sprigs found at the local tree lot. The faux tree in the dining room was flocked by Janet.



tip:

FRESH FLOWERS ARE OFTEN FORGOTTEN OVER THE HOLIDAYS BUT CAN BE USED TO ADD COLOR WITHOUT MUCH FUSS.





With the dining room just steps away from the living room, the theme of holiday blues is carried across for harmony. I took a faux tree that I found tossed by the side of the road and gave it a light flocking using white spray paint on the tips. If you are going to flock a tree with this method, be sure to do so outdoors, as it makes a mess. Allow the tree to dry for 24 hours, and look for a paint that has a primer built in.

The no-ornament theme is repeated on the dining room tree, with the light strands the only embellishment.

I love to create
the welcoming
and warm
aura of
fresh forest
AS YOU ENTER
OUR HOME ...

[RIGHT] A TULLE WREATH is hung on a piece of reclaimed wood updated with hooks.

[BELOW] MASON JARS AND SPRIGS are used to create simple and inexpensive decor.



For more on Janet, visit shabbyfufu.com.





THIS CORNER OF THE HOME highlights pieces from Janet's collection, including silver, dishware and a dress-maker's form.

tip:

USE SALVAGED PIECES TO ADD ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST WHERE NONE EXISTS. LOOK FOR OLD MANTELS WHEN VISITING FLEA MARKETS AND TAG SALES, AND DRESS THEM UP FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON.

A vignette is set up on the vintage dresser turned buffet sideboard. I used a variety of treasured pieces from my collections with candles and glassware as the shimmering stars. A large fresh boxwood wreath and small touches of greenery and fresh flowers bring life and varied interest.

All of these elements contribute to making our holiday home a welcoming haven for the season and for friends and family to enjoy without fuss.





Hot Cocoa Bar

Sweeten up your holiday décor with a treat the whole family will love.

Written and photographed by Jessica Kirkland

A MUG OF HOT COCOA ON A COLD WINTER

night always warms the hearts of the ones you love. Create a delightful hot cocoa station in your home to usher in the holiday season while adding charm to your décor. Dedicate a small area of your home or a corner in your kitchen to displaying a few basic ingredients that will allow family and friends to whip up mugs of hot chocolate during the holidays and the entire winter season.

Make your own homemade hot cocoa mix or use your favorite brand of individual hot cocoa packets. Offer simple toppings like crushed peppermint, chocolate chips, sprinkles and marshmallows to be stirred into the hot cocoa or as garnishes on top of whipped cream.

[ABOVE] PRINT COORDINATING LABELS for your favorite nonperishable hot cocoa add-ons. Be sure to include spoons for easy dispensing.

[OPPOSITE] GUESTS WILL ENJOY concocting their own specialty combinations, like salted caramel or peppermint marshmallow.





SIMPLE SEASONAL ACCENTS like a small potted fir wrapped in lace and burlap or a tree slice still wearing its bark keep the focus on what's important here: delicious sweets and treats.



[RIGHT] CHOCOLATE SPRINKLES, CARAMEL, SEA SALT AND WHIPPED CREAM make fun and tasty toppings for your hot cocoa.

Make it extra special by filling unused soap dispensers with simple syrups to flavor the hot cocoa and place a jar of wafer cookies nearby. Then all you need are some mugs and peppermint candy stir sticks for fun, in addition to the hot cocoa mix and a few toppings.

Taking time to create a hot cocoa bar for your home is a sweet holiday tradition your family and friends are going to love.



For more on Jessica, visit
pnpflowersinc.com.





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SITTING *pretty*

Written, photographed and styled by Melinda Graham

Before the holiday season gets into full swing, find a quiet corner to sit and plan for the hectic months ahead. One homeowner does just that by creating an inspirational space for holiday planning and peaceful reflection.

THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS BLOWING IN LIKE A COLD WINTER'S BREEZE.



There is so much to do in a short window of time. For many people the holidays pass so quickly and with so much chaos that the enjoyment is all but lost. Why not try a new approach this year? Take time to find joy in each and every day. Planning is a big part of making the process more enjoyable and less stressful. Slowing down does not mean accomplishing less. It allows time for reflection and peace during a season that never seems to stop. One homeowner has carved out a peaceful spot in her home to plan for the upcoming holiday events as well as take in all the season has to offer.

There must be a place in your home where you find peaceful solitude. This cottage-style home has a small sitting room tucked into the top floor of the house beneath the sloping roof. This space may be small in size, but it has an abundance of character. A few select furnishings were needed to fill the space. Mix-and-match thrift-shop

OPPOSITE: AS THE DAYS GROW SHORTER AND COLDER, having a comfy chair next to a sunny window can provide a lovely place to warm your toes and your heart. As evening approaches, the glow of the tree twinkling along with the stars marks the end of each full day.

THIS PAGE: A DIMINUTIVE ANTIQUE DESK is hiding in the corner behind the tree. It is a quaint spot to sit and write holiday greetings to friends and family.

Simply

TOP LEFT: CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, WRAPPING PRESENTS can be fun and inexpensive. Use mix-and-match papers and add ribbons in cheerful colors; then add a special touch like a small ornament to the package.

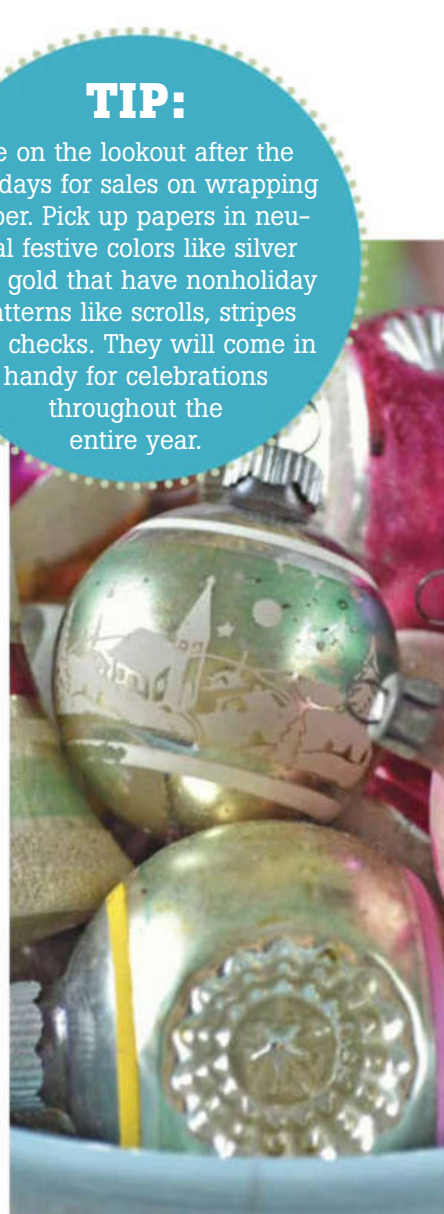
RIGHT: COLLECTING VINTAGE ORNAMENTS IS AN ALL-YEAR AFFAIR. Scour thrift shops, garage sales and auctions for wonderful old beauties. The variety is simply mind-boggling. Piled into a bowl, these colorful treasures can be admired throughout the holidays and, if you like, all year long.

BOTTOM LEFT: HOLIDAY EPHEMERA ARE NOT ONLY FUN TO COLLECT for their inherent beauty, but old pieces like books filled with holiday adventures are delightful to read throughout the season. Reading a story or two can be a tremendous source of holiday inspiration.

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

This holiday season take a step back in time and look to your childhood when filling your calendar. Take time to embrace happy memories and the holidays will surely be filled with joy. Here are a few activities that should find their way into your holiday schedule.

- Make a festive wreath with fresh pine boughs and berries.
- Bake cookies for "Santa" (but be sure to sample them yourself).
- Fill your home with holiday joy by filling the air with seasonal tunes.
- Read stories before bed to ensure that sugarplums will be dancing in your head.
- Hang stockings with a hopeful heart.
- Enjoy hot chocolate with lots of marshmallows.
- Make homemade greeting cards for the special people in your life.
- Partake in outdoor delights like ice skating, caroling and sleigh rides.
- Create a clever gingerbread house with all the sweet treats and trimmings.
- Start new holiday traditions of your own, like an annual tree-decorating party or a gift exchange.



TIP:

Be on the lookout after the holidays for sales on wrapping paper. Pick up papers in neutral festive colors like silver and gold that have nonholiday patterns like scrolls, stripes and checks. They will come in handy for celebrations throughout the entire year.

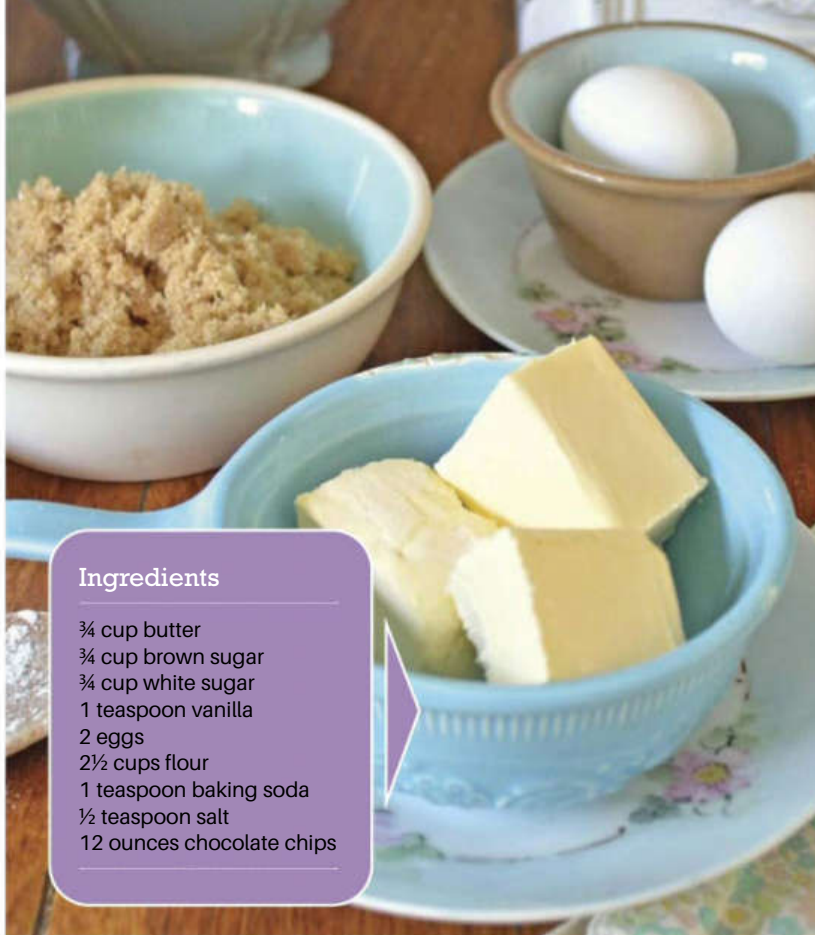
finds were brought together to make the suite complete: a down-filled wingback chair, a small antique desk, a loveseat and a coffee table. This sitting room doubles as a makeshift library, with gardening books stacked all about as part of the delightful décor.

It is common practice in this home to decorate the sitting room first, long before the holiday festivities ever begin. The space isn't completely transformed to match a traditional Christmas palette. Instead, the retro straw-colored tree finds its perch in front of the window and is dressed with vintage glass ornaments in shades that complement the room's cheerful décor. The dazzling display is all that is needed to elevate the sitting room/garden library into a festive feast for the eyes.

Transitioning into the holiday season can feel like a burden when life is already hectic. But decorating this room first helps the family get into the holiday spirit. Decorating a tree can be a wonderful motivator and a terrific way to boost your holiday spirit. This cozy sitting room provides a great place to plan out the hectic months ahead, and it also is the perfect spot to sit and reflect at the end of each day.

One easy way to make a plan is to create a schedule. First, mark the calendar with important dates and events. Then fill the days with things that bring joy: making wreaths, baking cookies and reading Christmas stories. As each day passes, retreat to your cozy corner to reflect on the day and look ahead to what tomorrow's schedule holds.

Decorate your home with enthusiasm and purpose this holiday season. First look for inspiration. Then get motivated by finding a cozy corner you can dress in festive fashion. Next, make a schedule by filling a calendar with everything you hope to accomplish in the months to come. Lastly, find a few moments at the end of each day to sit and reflect in the glow of the holiday's twinkling lights. Fill your home to the rafters with holiday décor that makes you smile. Enjoy the season to the fullest and make it your own by surrounding yourself with delight. The joy will be contagious, so don't hesitate to share.



Ingredients

- ¾ cup butter
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- ¾ cup white sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 eggs
- 2½ cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 12 ounces chocolate chips



STOP AND SMELL THE COOKIES

The holidays are just not the same without fresh-baked cookies. The recipe doesn't need to be complicated or fancy. Just the smell of cookies baking in the oven will conjure up memories of happy holidays past. Here is a quick, simple recipe for homemade chocolate-chip cookies.

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Using an electric mixer, cream the butter, brown sugar, white sugar and vanilla. Continue mixing and add two eggs, one at a time. Beat until smooth.
3. In a separate bowl combine the flour, baking soda and salt.
4. Add the dry mixture slowly into the mixing bowl. Once it is incorporated, add chocolate chips and stir.
5. Drop the dough by rounded spoonfuls onto a lightly greased cookie sheet.
6. Bake at 350°F for 8-10 minutes.
7. Allow cookies to rest on the cookie sheet for 1 minute; then remove them to a clean surface to cool.

TIP:

Your patterned votive holders will also make great last-minute gifts. Present a grouping of two or more inside a box that is wrapped up with twine.

Soft GLOW

Create these votive holders to
decorate your holiday home.

Written, photographed and styled by Ayda Algin

The background image shows a festive holiday scene. In the foreground, three white ceramic votive holders are arranged on a light-colored wooden surface. The holder on the left is decorated with small gold stars, the middle one with a large gold star, and the one on the right with gold polka dots. Behind them is a white mug with a gold rim and handle, containing a wooden spoon. To the right, a gift is wrapped in red and white patterned paper with a gold ribbon. The overall atmosphere is warm and cozy.

I ENJOY CREATING A WARM AND INVITING HOLIDAY RETREAT

with handmade décor and, of course, it's a wonderful feeling giving my handcrafted pieces to friends and family.

Candles are a favorite this time of year. They add ambiance and warmth to any holiday gathering. These adorable and easy-to-make votive holders are the perfect Christmas craft to add to your holiday home.

Customize the colors and design to fit your Christmas décor color scheme and style. You can make an exciting centerpiece or decorate your mantel, windowsill, even your porch with the votive holders. They can also be a thoughtful yet inexpensive gift.

Personalize

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Glass cups
- Translucent paper
- Gold paper
- Scissors
- Hole punch (I used a star punch.)
- Glue stick
- Candles

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Place the glass cup on the translucent paper, trace around the glass and cut out the shape with sharp scissors.
2. Wrap the translucent paper around the cup and seal the edges with glue. Trim off any excess paper.
3. Punch shapes out of the gold paper with your hole punch.
4. Glue the gold-paper shapes onto the translucent paper covering the cups.
5. Once everything is dry, put a candle in each votive holder and display them around your home, or give them as pretty holiday gifts.



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OF BLOOMS.



For more on Ayda, visit
cafenohut.com.

Shopping Guide

A Romantic Christmas

pages 34–40

Blue Christmas wreath: Stephanie Bradley, visit spanishdahlia.etsy.com.

Ruffled stockings: Vintage Rose Collection, (781) 837-6714 or vintagerosecollection.com.

Full of Cheer

pages 42–45

Napkins: Pier 1, visit pier1.com.

Napkins: Pottery Barn, visit potterybarn.com.

Other décor and accessories: From the author's collection.

White trees: Michaels, visit michaels.com.

Christmas Charms

pages 46–59

Baking and party accessories: Bake & Party, visit bakeandparty.fi.

Select Christmas ornaments: Maileg, visit maileg.com.

Festive Flair

pages 60–73

Accessories: Designers Guild, visit designersguild.com.

Bedding: Similar available from The White Company, visit thewhitecompany.com.

Belfast ceramic sink: Similar available from Wickes, visit wickes.co.uk.

Bette bath: C.P. Hart, visit cphart.co.uk.

Christmas decorations, cushions: Caroline

Zoob, visit carolinezoob.co.uk.

Corner sofa: Similar available in The Stella range from Sofa.com, visit sofa.com.

Cushions: Voyage fabric, discontinued, Room Interiors, visit roominteriors.co.uk.

Doll's house and sculpture on storage cabinet, text and stair details: Karl Smith of Carved Oak, visit carvedoak.co.uk.

Fisherman's pendant lamp: Similar available from Pebbles to Sand, visit pebblestosand.co.uk.

Floorboard paint (Middleton Pink, Blackened, Great White and Pavilion Gray); kitchen units paint (Joa's White); chairs paint (Dayroom Yellow, Lancaster Yellow and Lulworth Blue); floor paint (Lime White); stairs paint (Calamine, Middleton Pink and Pavilion Gray); tongue-and-groove paneling paint (Great White) Farrow & Ball; visit farrow-ball.com.

Patchwork quilts, florist buckets: notonthehighstreet.com, visit notonthehighstreet.com.

Pebble tiles: Similar available from Mandarin Stone, visit mandarinstone.com.

Pink jug: Susie Watson Designs, discontinued, visit susiewatsondesigns.co.uk.

Pleasure Gardens Bloom fabric: Romo, visit romo.com.

Retro-style refrigerator: Smeg, visit smeg.com.

Shutters: Similar available from The New

England Shutter Company, visit

thenewenglandshuttercompany.com.

Task lamp: Similar to the Elliot Task Lamp from John Lewis, visit johnlewis.com.

Weighing scales: Purchased in an antiques shop.

White beaded mirror: Similar available from Nordic House, visit nordichouse.co.uk.

Wooden houses, miniatures, cushions, *Midsummer Dreaming*, *Bliss*, *Desire* cushions, *Endless Love* painting and other artwork, Christmas stockings: Jessica Zoob, visit jessicazoob.com.

Festivity in Glow

pages 80–91

Wallpaper: Wallquest, (610) 293-1330 or wallquest.com.

All That Glitters

pages 92–103

Artwork: Gabryel Harrison, visit gabryel.com.

Bed, bedding, cards, chandelier, cloche, clock, coffee table, cowhide, dining chairs, dining table, garland, gift wrap, gilt mirror, lamp, nightstand, piano, pouffe, sectional, silver tray, striped stocking, task lamp, tinsel tree prints, toss cushion, vase, vintage gilt chair, wallpaper: The Cross Décor & Design, (604) 689-2900 or thecrossdesign.com.
Sheepskin, table lamp: Ikea, visit ikea.com.



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Coming Next Month

JANET COON



MATTHEW MEAD

GET MERRY!

We're celebrating the holidays with festive gatherings in our December issue. We'll take you inside one-of-a-kind Christmas parties and beautiful holiday homes. The issue will also feature our editors' top holiday gift picks. Get inspired to throw an unforgettable celebration.

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DEBI & BARBARA THOMAS,

Traditions

TRADITIONS IS A RETAILER THAT OFFERS DÉCOR AND ACCESSORIES for all the major holidays every day in its store and online. "We began our business as an antique and year-round Christmas store, [and] within a few months we saw an opportunity in featuring all holidays every day in our store, so we narrowed our focus and committed 100 percent to every holiday 365 days a year," say owners Debi and Barbara Thomas. "We set out to be the source for everything our customers would want for all of the major holidays."

Here they share a few of their favorite Christmas items available at christmastraditions.com.



515228 SANTA FACE MEASURING SPOONS: ▲

These spoons are the ideal gift for someone who loves to cook or for the hostess of that special Christmas party. These Santa-face measuring spoons measure from 1 tablespoon to 1/8 teaspoon, perfect for making Christmas sweets.



▲ 113181B RED CUTOUT COTTAGE:

There is so much detail on this charming LED-lit Christmas village house—the scrollwork on the eaves, overlapping scales on the roof—and the base is edged in die-cut diamond cardboard. The house is painted red and dusted with glitter. It has a warm glow from the windows when it is illuminated.

LG0766 KITSCHMAS TREE:

A Bethany Lowe-designed village tree filled with kitsch—embellished with mini snowmen and clown dolls, candy canes and wrapped presents, and covered with gold mica flakes. It's a truly vintage tree.



38179 DANCING NOELLE: ▲

Noelle is so happy that winter is here, she is practically dancing. She has gathered some trees and a few snowballs (her brother better watch out). Made of paper pulp, covered in felt and dusted with glitter, she is a cute collectible by Margaret Haire that will delight all ages.

PK25087 MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS SIGN BOX: ►

A little wooden Merry Christmas sign box is the perfect backdrop for a Christmas vignette display.



▲ HOU-194 RETRO TURQUOISE

COUNTRY HOUSE: Kids have built a snowman by the front porch of a colorful retro country house. This petite-sized cardboard house by Cody Foster & Co. has cotton-batting snow with lots of sparkling mica, perfect for a vintage Christmas village.



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